

Beauty and the Beast

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## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

*by Regina McBride*

My father's face was a lion's face  
with magnificent red hair.  
The fillings in his teeth were jewels  
flowing with sexual currents.

In the room of living furniture  
he kept me:  
The Centerpiece.  
The Secret Keeper.

I remember an illustration  
of Saint Thérèse of Liseaux,  
dying like a good girl at twenty four,  
a ribbon of blood

spilling from the corner of her mouth.  
Fidelity to silence  
ecstatic veils weaving  
around her head

powers that gave her the gift of Consumption.  
Older nuns attended her bed  
changing the blood stained sheets,  
envious of her honeymoon with Christ.

\* \* \* \*

It was with a feeling of black-out  
I learned to latch on my dog mask  
and stand in the doorway, half human.  
It was with a discordant bell

I kept him out.  
Mistress to a pack of dogs,  
barking oracles.  
Bitch Guardian with a black curling lip.